

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 43

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 52

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 43—Relative to Autism Awareness Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 17, 2005.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 43, Figueroa. Autism Awareness Month.

This measure would proclaim April 2005 as Autism Awareness Month and would acknowledge the contributions made in the area of early autism intervention treatment by experts in the field and the sacrifice and dedication of families of autistic people. The measure would also declare the Legislature's support for increasing federal funding for autism research and the Legislature's continuing support of research into the causes and treatment of autism by the University of California, Davis M.I.N.D. Institute, and the work of the California Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Research and Epidemiology, and others. The measure would commend the United States Department of Health and Human Services for the swift implementation of the Children's Health Act of 2000. The measure would stress the need to begin early intervention services soon after a child has been diagnosed with autism.

WHEREAS, The Autism Society of America, Cure Autism Now, the National Alliance for Autism Research, Unlocking Autism, and numerous other organizations commemorate April as National Autism Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, Autism is a developmental disorder that is typically diagnosed during the first three years of life and limits an individual's ability to communicate and interact with others; and

WHEREAS, Autism is four times more likely to occur in boys than in girls, but can affect anyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, or other factors; and

WHEREAS, The number of persons with autism in California doubled between 1998 and 2002, and approximately 3,000 individuals with autism are newly diagnosed and served by regional centers each year. The State Department of Developmental Services has developed and published Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Best Practice Guidelines for Screening, Diagnosis and Assessment to address the needs of this population; and

WHEREAS, Early intervention behavior analysis programs have shown that a program of intensive early intervention treatment that focuses on a multidisciplinary approach, relying in large part on family and community participation, can produce a positive outcome; and

WHEREAS, There is a significantly greater proportion of families with young children with autism requesting intervention services, and there is a great need for qualified professionals capable of diagnosing autism in a timely and accurate manner. The State Department of Developmental Services developed and implemented its Learning Collaborative model to efficiently promote diagnostic best practices through the 21 regional centers; and

WHEREAS, Current research being conducted into the biological causes and treatment regimens for autism, like that being undertaken at the Medical Investigation of Neurodevelopmental Disorders (M.I.N.D.) Institute at the University of California, Davis, is showing great promise and should be encouraged and supported; and

WHEREAS, The California Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Research and Epidemiology (CADDRE) in the Environmental Health Investigations Branch of the State Department of Health Services is working in partnership with the State Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Regional Centers, Northern California Kaiser Permanente, clinics, and other providers throughout California to build a comprehensive surveillance system to count children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). California CADDRE also conducts studies in California to investigate possible causes and risk factors associated with autism; and

WHEREAS, People with autism need additional special education teachers, curriculum, behavioral specialists, occupational speech therapists, and medical professionals to ultimately enable them to function in the least restrictive environment; and

WHEREAS, Parental involvement, community integration, early intervention, increased acceptance of people with special needs, and systematic treatment are all key components that would help make a more favorable future likely for people with autism; and

WHEREAS, Heightened awareness of and education about autism helps to achieve these components; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby proclaims the month of April 2005 as Autism Awareness Month and acknowledges the contributions made in the area of early autism intervention treatment by experts in the field as well as the families involved; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature recognizes and commends the parents and relatives of children with autism for their sacrifice and dedication in providing for the special needs of children with autism and for absorbing significant financial costs for specialized education and support services; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature supports the goal of increasing federal funding for aggressive research to learn the root causes of autism, identify the best methods of early intervention and treatment, expand programs for individuals with autism across their lifespan, and promote understanding of the special needs of people with autism; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature continues to support research into the causes and treatment of autism by the University of California, Davis M.I.N.D. Institute, as well as the work of California CADDRE and others; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature commends the United States Department of Health and Human Services for the swift implementation of the Children’s Health Act of 2000, particularly for establishing four “Centers of Excellence” at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study the epidemiology of autism and related disorders and the proposed “Centers of Excellence” at the National Institutes of Health for autism research; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature stresses the need to begin early intervention services soon after a child has been diagnosed with autism, noting that early intervention strategies are the primary therapeutic options for young people with autism, and early intervention significantly improves outcomes for people with autism and can reduce the level of funding and services needed later in life; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, the State Department of Developmental Services, the State Department of Health Services, Area Boards V and VIII, the State Department of Education, local chapters of the Autism Society, regional centers, the Association of Regional Center Agencies, Protection and Advocacy, Inc., the University of California, Davis M.I.N.D. Institute, the United States Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the California School Boards Association, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.